

# CITY OF ATASCADERO

## GENERAL PLAN



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## LAND USE ELEMENT

and

## CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENTS





GENERAL PLAN TO THE GENERAL PLAN

Note: The following changes, amendments and deletions of this plan and related maps and regulations have been approved.

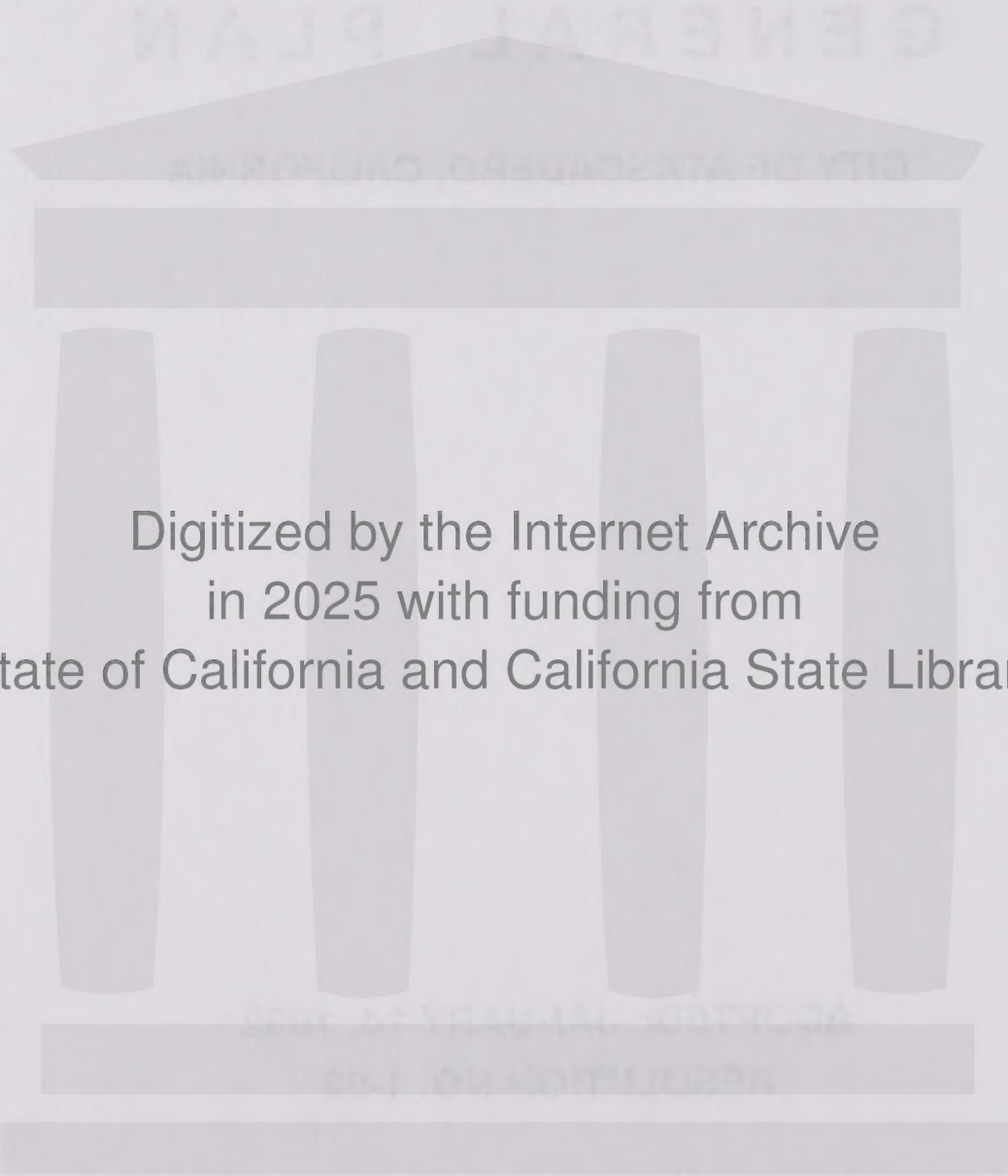
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# GENERAL PLAN

## CITY OF ATASCADERO, CALIFORNIA

**ADOPTED: JANUARY 14, 1992**  
**RESOLUTION NO. 1-92**

INCLUDES REVISIONS THROUGH: JULY 12, 1994



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## RECORD OF CHANGES TO THE GENERAL PLAN

Note the Amendment Number, Resolution and Date of the change and initial when replacement pages are inserted.

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## INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION





## I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Atascadero is a unique, historic master planned community whose street layout and historic buildings qualify for registry in the National Registry of Historic Places. In 1913, the community's founder, E.G. Lewis, assembled a highly innovative interdisciplinary planning design team comprised of architects, engineers, surveyors and soil scientists to prepare a phased plan for the Atascadero Colony which uniquely combined Beaux Arts planning principles for the downtown civic center area with Garden City concepts for the curvilinear residential street system that relates so well to the topography of the Atascadero Colony. Hence, the contemporary general plan for Atascadero has as its challenge one of holding to the verities of the original plan while meeting the contemporary needs of the community.

### A. CALIFORNIA PLANNING LAW

The State of California mandates that each city and county prepare, adopt and maintain a General Plan to guide the physical development of each community. Each plan is required, under Government Code Section 65302, to contain at least seven elements which are: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. General Plans are required to be comprehensive, long-term, and internally consistent and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research in 1978 identified six objectives of the General Plan:

1. To identify the community's environmental, social and economic goals.
2. To state the adopting agency's policies regarding the maintenance or improvement of existing development and the location and characteristics of future development needed to achieve community goals.
3. To establish within local government the capability to analyze local conditions and to respond to problems and opportunities concerning community development in a way consistent with local, regional and state goals and policies.
4. To provide citizens with information on their community and with opportunities to understand and participate in the planning and decision-making process of local government.
5. To identify the need for and methods of improving the coordination of community development activities among all units of government.
6. To promote a pattern of development consistent with goals and policies of the state and with regional needs.





Under both state law and City of Atascadero policies, the General Plan serves as the "Constitution" for decisions relative to its physical development. Towards this end, consistency and conformity with the General Plan are required in such matters as zoning approvals, re-zonings, subdivision approvals, land acquisition or disposition, capital improvement programming, redevelopment and the agricultural preserve program. Related to all of the development activities guided by the General Plan is the State of California's Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which applies to both public and private projects with the objective of minimizing and mitigating any adverse environmental effects caused by development.

## **B. ATASCADERO'S HISTORY**

Prior to E.G. Lewis' acquisition in 1913 of the 23,770-acre Atascadero Ranch, the area was used for cattle grazing. The first building in the Atascadero area was an adobe built in 1812 by a man from Mission San Miguel for the southern outpost of that mission's grazing lands. Portions of the adobe walls stood until recently near Traffic Way. During the 19th century, cattle ran in large tracts that had been Mexican land grants. Toward the end of the century, J.H. Henry consolidated a number of tracts into the Atascadero Ranch which included all of the present planning area, except for Baron von Schroeder's Eaglet tract and the flatlands east of the Salinas River.

During the early years of this century, the U.S. Army used the central plain of the ranch for annual encampments and maneuvers and it once had been recommended for acquisition as a permanent military camp.

In 1913, Edward Gardner Lewis selected the Atascadero Ranch as the ideal location for a model colony. It was Lewis' plan that this model community would provide its residents with the most favorable aspects of both urban and rural life, and planning anticipated the widespread use of the automobile. Among the reasons given by Lewis for his choice was its location halfway between the major urban centers of the state on both railway and state highway. The oak covered rolling foothills of the Santa Lucia Range provided ample water, pleasant climate and proximity to the coast.

After purchasing the property, Lewis employed a group of nationally recognized experts to plan, survey and subdivide the entire thirty-eight square miles. Many of the concepts put into practice then were progressive even by today's standards. Instead of subdividing on a piecemeal basis as immediate demand might require, the full colony area was surveyed, subdivided and plats filed with the County Recorder in October of 1914. Contrary to the

speculative nature of many early cities in the United States and California, some 100 miles of roads were constructed with care for aesthetics as well as circulation; a water system of wells, tanks and mains was installed; 3,000 acres of orchards consisting of more than 20,000 pear, apple, peach, prune, and apricot trees were planted; parks were laid out; and public buildings were designed and construction begun.

Meanwhile, the nationwide promotional campaign successfully provided the money for the development and attracted resident to the colony from every part of the country. Future residents lived in a tent city with complete accommodations for 1,000 persons waiting for the signal that residential building might start. This signal was given early in 1915 after two years of preparatory work. In that year the imposing four-story Administration Building neared completion at a cost of \$136,000, as did a large printing plant for E.G. Lewis' magazine and a shopping center to serve the residents. An industrial center was producing the construction materials and included machine and maintenance shops and warehouses. A ten-mile stretch of what is now El Camino Real was paved with concrete and a lighted concrete bridge spanned Atascadero Creek. A twenty-mile road was constructed through the Santa Lucias connecting the Colony to the 1,000-acre Atascadero Beach properties which was completed at a cost of \$90,000. Subsequently schools, a community center with a swimming pool, a hospital and a hotel at the beach were built. Pine Mountain Stadium was developed and used for many community activities. Golf courses were built in the Colony and on the beach property. Tennis courts were installed close to the Civic Center. The Community Center was, in addition to many other uses, the home of the Federated Church of Atascadero where members of twenty-three Protestant denominations worshiped together.

The Colony's major enterprises, other than agriculture and a flower seed experiment, were a lumber mill and yard, a brick plant, the shopping center, the offices of the Colony Holding Corporation, a doll factory, a fruit and vegetable processing plant and a very large and active printing and publishing plant. At their zenith, each of the latter two plants employed several hundred persons, and the local post office was third in mail volume statewide.

The Atascadero Mutual Water Company is the one commercial organization dating from the Colony's founding that still retains its original form, that is, shares of capital stock that go with and are pertinent to each lot. These shares cannot be sold or disposed of separately from the land. The entire water system--pumping plants, reservoirs, mains, etc.--is the property of the Atascadero Mutual Water Company which is owned mutually by the owners of the land.



Unfortunately, development of the planned community halted abruptly in 1924 when E.G. Lewis was forced into bankruptcy. The effect of this and, subsequently, of the Depression years was a retarded and more prosaic growth during the following several decades. Atascadero's growth to that of the second most populous city in the county of San Luis Obispo commenced following the bisection of the city in 1954 by Highway 101 together with siting of the Atascadero State Hospital on the edge of the community in 1956.

#### **C. COUNTY GENERAL PLAN**

In 1968, the county adopted a General Plan for guidance of the growth in the unincorporated community of Atascadero which had been recommended to it by the local advisory committee. This advisory committee represented a cross-section of local residents who advised the County Board of Supervisors on local land use matters. In 1972, pressed by ongoing growth and the more stringent requirements of state planning law, the local advisory committee was expanded and served as a policy-directing entity to the county in the development of what became known as the 1980 General Plan. Altogether, some 150 citizen volunteers participated in the formulation of that plan including eighty-two citizens of the Atascadero Advisory Committee. That draft plan was hammered out over eighteen months of study sessions and adopted by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors in December, 1978. In June, 1979 the people of Atascadero voted in favor of incorporation. The newly elected City Council directed the Planning Commission to review and update the 1978 General Plan as its first major undertaking. Public hearings were conducted and the 1980 General Plan became the first major planning document adopted by the newly incorporated City of Atascadero. Subsequently, in 1983, a new zoning ordinance designed to implement that plan consistent with state law was also adopted. Because of the extent of public participation in its preparation, the 1980 General Plan was also thought of as The People's Plan.

#### **D. GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

In 1985, the City began preparations for updating of the 1980 General Plan through preparation of new base maps. Documents entitled General Plan Update, Phase I and Phase II were prepared over fiscal years 1986 and 1987. This planning process included an inventory and analysis of existing land use, measurement and evaluation of existing zoning, analysis of existing multi-family housing in relation to the amount of land zoned, study of existing and zoned commercial uses, study of existing and zoned industrial



uses, and development of a population capacity analysis which confirmed that the land area zoned residential in Atascadero provided for a population capacity of slightly less than 33,000 persons which was consistent with the intent of the General Plan and the goals set by E.G. Lewis in the planning for the original colony.

In addition, the Planning Commission held a number of community forums in each quadrant of the City and city-wide to elicit community comment and suggestions toward strengthening the City's General Plan. Many goals and policies of the 1980 General Plan were reviewed at these community forums and discussed in a series of joint study sessions between the Planning Commission and City Council in meetings held throughout 1988. Subsequently, a General Plan Committee comprised of representatives from the Planning Commission and City Council have worked with staff of the Community Development Department to provide for an updated General Plan which reflects the ongoing goals and aspirations of the City of Atascadero.



**LAND USE ELEMENT**  
(Including Open Space and Conservation Elements)



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## II. LAND USE ELEMENT

### A. BASIC COMMUNITY GOALS

Atascadero should retain its overall character and rural atmosphere with the long-term protection of the environment as a primary guiding criteria for public policy decisions. Toward this end, the following goals are basic to all elements of the Atascadero General Plan:

- \* Protect and preserve the rural atmosphere of the community by assuring "elbow room" for residents by means of maintenance of large lot sizes which increase in proportion to distance beyond the urban core.
- \* Provide for a sound economic base to sustain the City's unique character.
- \* Preserve residential neighborhoods and respect the winding tree-lined nature of the street and road system.
- \* Preserve the contours of the hills. Buildings built on hill-sides shall conform to the topography using the slope of the land as the basis for the design of the structure.
- \* Preserve natural flora and fauna.
- \* Designate areas where livestock can be owned and maintained.
- \* Provide for a comprehensive system of routes-to-schools and parks which may include creekside trails.
- \* Provide for walkways, horse trails, and bikeways without curbs and sidewalks in some rural areas.
- \* Provide for a strong and distinctive downtown area.
- \* Transform the existing El Camino Real "strip" into distinctive, attractive and efficient commercial, office and industrial park areas which can provide for the long-term economic viability of the community.
- \* Provide for adequate public services.

### B. POPULATION

Demographics is destiny and fundamental to every General Plan; is an analysis of past, present, and projected population levels. Population and housing statistics are contained in the Housing

Element and in the General Plan Update Phase I where a 1987 population holding capacity of approximately 33,000 persons was established.

The density standards and land use designations of the land use plan reduced the City's population holding capacity to approximately 31,150 persons. Sound awareness of population trends and composition is needed because growth creates demands for public facilities and services. Hence, population projections provide a basis for determining future land use needs for both public and private activities.

#### 1. PAST TRENDS

Atascadero began with fewer than 100 permanent residents in 1914 with the Colony growing slowly to approximately 3,400 persons in 1950. During this decade, Highway 101 bisected the community and the area's largest employer, the Atascadero State Hospital was established. In 1956, a sanitary district was established through the county. A sewer bond was passed in 1968 and sewer service was subsequently provided for the center of the community by 1972. In addition to resolving a public health problem, sewer enabled intensification of land uses. Between 1960 and 1980, the population increased by over 78% with an additional 7,141 persons being added to the community. Most of the growth was in-migration, both from the major metropolitan areas to the south and north and through resettlement from other communities within the county. Owing to the character of the area with rolling woodlands subdivided for large lots, many incoming residents sought the rural lifestyle of a bedroom community and commuted to jobs beyond the community. Historically, the primary source of employment has been San Luis Obispo but in recent years employment opportunities in Paso Robles have gained significantly.

The 1980 census following incorporation was the first official community census in the traditional term. Data for prior years was obtained for area census tracts and County Planning Department and Advisory Committee estimates. The following Table, II-1, charts the course of population trends from 1980 through 1990 as developed annually by the California State Department of Finance. For the ten-year period cited, the community has grown an additional 43% for an average of 4.3% per year. Interestingly, the total population increase of 6,906 persons closely equates with the total population that has been added to the community in each of the prior two decades.



TABLE II-1

POPULATION TRENDS: 1980-1990  
City of Atascadero

YEAR	POPULATION	PERCENT INCREASE
1980	16,232	--
1981	16,604	2.29%
1982	17,224	3.73%
1983	17,685	2.68%
1984	18,205	2.94%
1985	18,950	4.09%
1986	19,901	5.02%
1987	20,896	5.00%
1988	22,190	6.19%
1989	22,725	2.41%
1990	23,138	1.82%

Source: California State Department of Finance (January 1 estimates), except for 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census

2. PROJECTION TO BUILD-OUT

The accompanying chart portrays the growth of Atascadero from 1940 to the present and beyond to full build-out in approximately the year 2002. The trend line to full build-out reflects an annual growth of 2.5% per year. It assumes a continued adequate supply of water and expansion, as necessary, of the sewer system to support the master planned population within the Urban Service Line, which defines the higher density urban core of the community. The fact that the City was master planned and subdivided earlier in this century is supportive of the City's objective of not growing beyond its ability to provide adequate service. The pattern of individual lot ownership serves to moderate the rate of growth within single family areas to permit local public agencies to gradually expand services.

With respect to the City's population capacity, it should be emphasized that this is the hypothetical holding capacity based on the General Plan and its implementing zoning and is therefore a maximum figure. As non-residential uses, such as schools and churches, are permitted to be developed within various residential zones, the effect is to reduce population capacity. Conversely, the population capacity could be increased if there is an increase in the number of group quarters, or if the State Hospital, with its resident population, were annexed to the City.

## C. LAND USE

The purpose of the Land Use Element is to be the definitive statement by text and map of what the community intends to be. The emphasis of this Land Use Element is in the establishment of goals and policies to guide short- and long-range decision making by the community. Goals represent the ultimate end towards which an effort is directed and are general in nature with the intention of providing direction. Policies represent an official statement providing more specific direction to guide actions. For purposes of this document, they may include objectives, criteria, standards, and principles and other terms frequently used to define legislative intent.

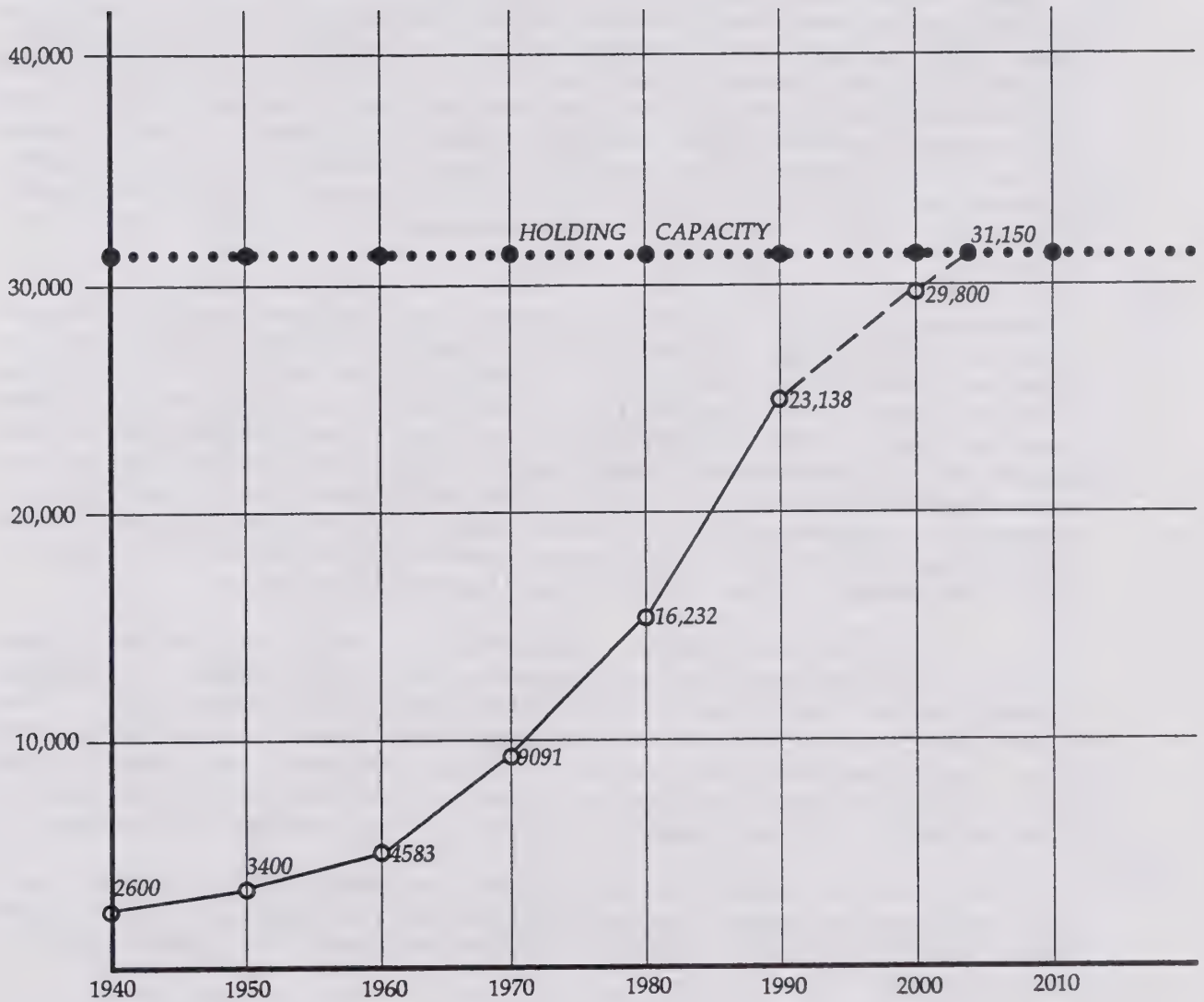
### 1. COMMUNITY FORM

Atascadero is a city that has the characteristics of both town and country located within a major oak woodland natural area. The city limits encompass 15,600 acres of land within an overall defined planning area of 29,980 acres. The original Colony road system was designed for the automobile (but not for the multi-automobile family) and was laid out in the form of a wheel, the hub being the Administration Park and central business district; the spokes being principal arterials. The outer rim of the wheel and several inter-concentric roads were also principal arterials designed to carry traffic from point to point without entering the downtown area. All of those concentric roads at this time have not been completely linked; e.g. Curbaril and San Gabriel. The community was bisected in 1954 by Highway 101 and this had dramatic impact on the form of the community, creating as it did the El Camino Real strip corridor.

Two state highways bisect the community at nearly right angles: Highway 41 and Highway 101. This condition creates four planning area quadrants which were especially useful in developing the parks and recreation element of the General Plan.

# CITY OF ATASCADERO

## POPULATION PROJECTION 1990 TO BUILD-OUT



Source: Atascadero Community Development Department - 1990  
(Revised 7-23-91)



The natural environment of Atascadero has numerous attributes that call for special and innovative planning. The scenic characteristics of the community require that great care be exercised in designating land uses and establishing development standards compatible with the varied nature of the community. The Atascadero Colony encompasses approximately 23,055 acres and lies within the interior coastal area of Central California with mountains of steeply faulted sedimentary rock which have eroded down to gently rolling hills. Generally, the ground cover is composed of several species of oak trees with live oak and valley oak being predominant with the slower growing blue oak not uncommon. Some of the higher hills are topped with native digger pines. South-facing slopes are characterized by chaparral growth while willows, sycamores, bay laurel and cottonwoods line the creeks and streams.

Elevations within Atascadero vary from 800 feet on the bed of the Salinas River to over 2,000 feet on ridge summits along the southwesterly boundary. Most of the terrain is in the form of gently rolling hills, but nearly level areas include the Salinas River flood plain and terrace, narrow lowlands adjacent to Atascadero Creek and Graves Creek, and the valley bisected by Highway 101. Between the freeway and the Salinas River are isolated hills, the most predominant of which is Pine Mountain whose 1,332 foot elevation provides a conspicuous backdrop to the central business district.

The Salinas River, often referred to as the "underground river," defines the eastern boundary of Atascadero, excepting county park lands and the Atascadero State Hospital. The State Division of Mines and Geology has classified a considerable portion of the Salinas River channel as containing significant mineral deposits, namely sand and gravel resources (refer to Technical Appendix - Mineral Resources Management).

The defined planning area contains significant divisions, each of which has a special application in the Land Use Plan. The function of these specific divisions may be described as follows:

a. Urban Reserve Line

The Urban Reserve Line indicates the ultimate boundary for urban and suburban uses. It relates closely to the provision of future public services and facilities and is dictated largely by topographic considerations, existing land use patterns and community attitudes. The Urban Reserve Line generally coincides with the Atascadero Colony boundary, except for two Agricultural Preserves

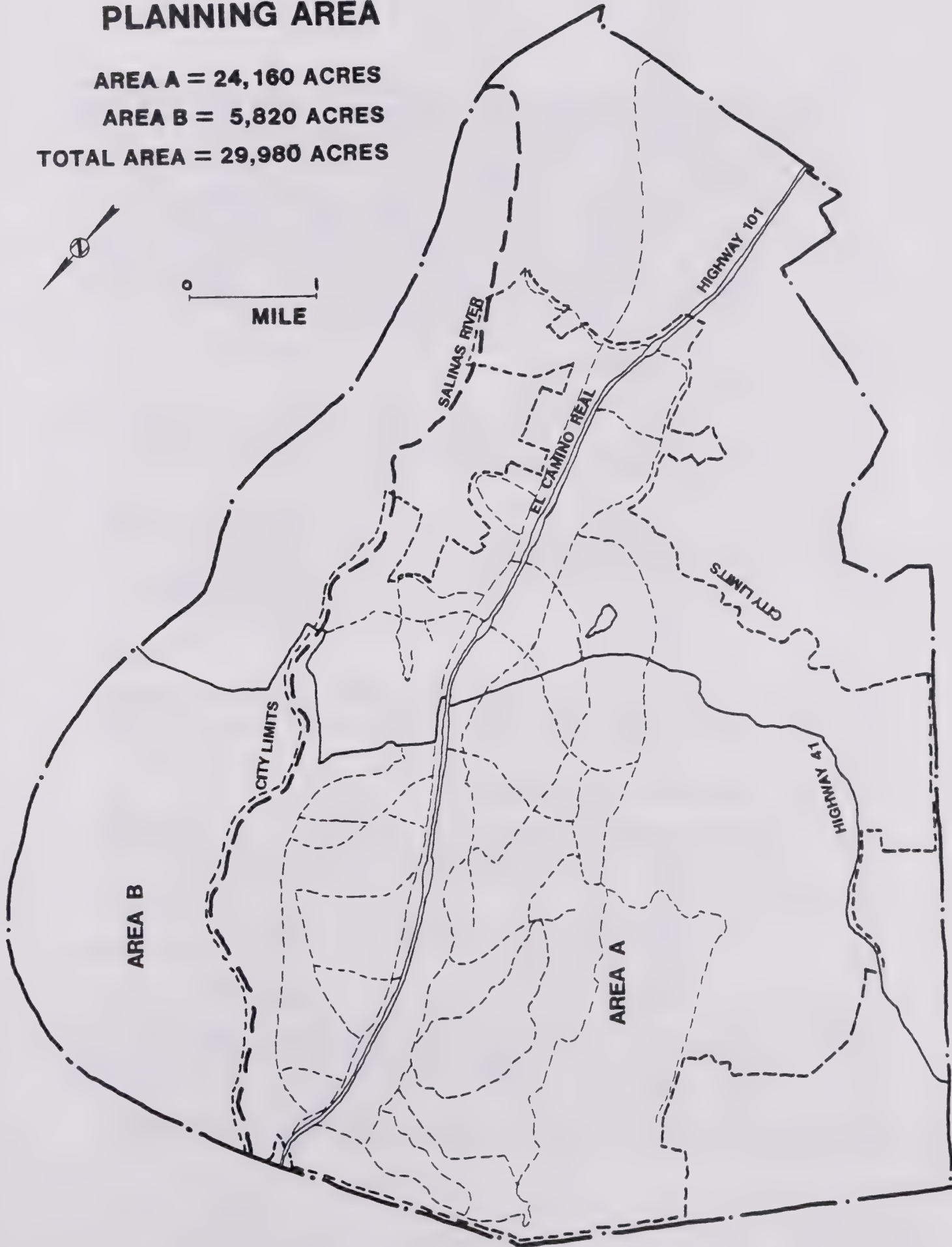


# CITY OF ATASCADERO PLANNING AREA

AREA A = 24,160 ACRES

AREA B = 5,820 ACRES

TOTAL AREA = 29,980 ACRES



and a portion of a third (the Eagle Ranch Agricultural Preserve has a total of 5,978 acres, of which 2,786 acres are within the Colony boundaries) that are located on the periphery of the Colony and excluding areas south of Santa Barbara Road and west of the summit of Frog Pond Mountain. Continued agricultural use of these properties is encouraged. If the properties are removed from preserve status and desire urban or suburban uses, it will be necessary to expand the Urban Reserve Line by amending the General Plan. The Urban Reserve Area is further divided into two sub-areas, the Urban Services Area and the Suburban Services Area.

b. Urban Services Area

The Urban Services Line defines the area that will eventually be furnished with major public and quasi-public services. This area will be served by some or all of the essential urban services, including:

Ambulance	Solid Waste Disposal
Cultural Facilities	Storm Drainage
Fire Protection	Streets
Improvement Districts	Street Sweeping
Library	Street Trees
Parks	Utilities
Police	Water
Sewers	

Master storm drainage plans for selected sub-drainage basins within the urban services areas shall be prepared and implemented.

c. Suburban Services Area

The Suburban Services Area consists of the remainder of the City and that portion of the Eaglet Tract within the City boundaries. Services to be provided are:

Ambulance	Police
Creekway & Horse Trails	Streets
Fire Protection	Solid Waste Disposal
Improvement Districts	Utilities
Parks	Water

Importantly, sewer service will not be provided in this area except for "cease and desist" septic problem areas and where approved by the City Council for public uses.

Policies contained in the various elements of the City's

General Plan are intended to respect both the physical setting of the City and the historic plan which guided its development. The plan provides for a distinguishable urban core area surrounded by a low density suburban residential environment. Beyond the City's urban reserve line - which might more accurately be identified as suburban reserve line - the City's plan encourages rural residential, agricultural and other open space types of uses to both reinforce the City's identity and to maintain the open space characteristics historic to San Luis Obispo County. It is not in the City's nor the county's interest to allow land uses which would lead to the strip urbanization of either the Highway 101 corridor or Highway 41. In fact, neither one of these corridors can readily be widened throughout the county; 101 because of the Cuesta Grade and Highway 41 because of the extremely rough terrain lying between Morro Bay and the City of Atascadero. Maintaining the distinctive character of Atascadero will require coordinated planning with the county of San Luis Obispo. Toward this end, a county planning referral area encompassing that area lying between Vineyard Drive and the top of Cuesta Grade and Between the summit of the hills east of the Salinas River and the Cerro Alto Campground west of the City has been established. The county will consult the City before considering any land use intensification within the unincorporated portion of this planning referral area.

## 2. RESIDENTIAL

The accompanying land use plan map broadly distinguishes between two types of residential areas: (1) areas within the Urban Service Line which are characterized by sewer service and urban densities, and (2) areas beyond the Urban Service Line which are characterized as suburban single-family large lot areas (including agricultural enclaves) which are on private sewer systems. Large lots are a distinguishing characteristic of Atascadero and the density standards of the plan and regulatory zoning regulations shall preserve this feature thus insuring "elbow room" for present and future inhabitants. Such regulations shall also insure the keeping of domestic animals for pleasure and hobby with adequate protection of public health safety and general welfare.

With regard to the density standards that are contained herein, "Net" shall mean minimum lot size exclusive of private or publicly owned abutting road rights-of-way while "Gross" shall include abutting road right-of-way, regardless of ownership.

Residential densities in the land use plan decrease as the distance from the core increases. This serves to maintain the



rural atmosphere of the community together with defining a distinctive urban community. In order to understand the City's residential policies, they must be considered in conjunction with the policies of the housing element of the General Plan.

a. Single-Family Residential

Four categories of single-family residential land use are provided. Implementing zoning shall provide that single-family dwellings are the primary principal use permitted in each of these land use categories with conditional uses defined that may be authorized subject to findings of compatibility with the neighborhood.

(1) High Density

The minimum lot size for the creation of new lots within high density single family residential areas shall be 1/2 acre, net. It is the City's objective that all such areas be served with sewer.

(2) Moderate Density

Minimum lot size for the creation of new lots within moderate density areas shall be 1 acre (gross) if served by sewers and 1-1/2 acres (gross) if not served by sewers.

(3) Low Density

Minimum lot size for the creation of new lots within the low density residential areas shall range from 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 acres gross. Determination of appropriate lot sizes shall be based upon evaluation of such factors as slope, existence of a natural building site, availability of sewer service, response time for emergency services, distance from the center of the community, general character of the neighboring lands, percolation capability of the soil if proposed for private sewage disposal systems, adequacy of access, and adequacy of building site. Low density residential areas are appropriate for areas within the Urban Service Line where topography is relatively steep and where scenic or sensitive characteristics of the land should be protected through lighter density urban residential designation.



(4) Suburban

Minimum lot sizes for the creation of new lots within the suburban single-family residential category shall range from 2-1/2 to 10 acres, gross. Determination of appropriate lot sizes shall be based upon evaluation of such factors as slope, existence of a natural building site, availability of services, response time for emergency services, distance from the center of the community, general character of the neighboring lands, percolation capability of the site, adequacy of access, and adequacy of building site. Preference shall be given to conventional septic systems and new lots shall not be created which would require mound, evapotranspiration, or evapotranspiration/infiltration sewage disposal systems. New lots averaging 30% or more slope shall not be permitted; provided that exceptions may be permitted when the following conditions apply: (1) Such a lot contains a "building envelope" with less than 20% average slope which includes building footprint, access drives, leach field, etc., or (2) The creation of such a lot offers public dedications or easements which would have a direct benefit to City residents. This land use designation is the predominate land use in terms of acreage in the land use plan and occurs between the Urban Service Line and the Urban Reserve Line.

b. Multiple-Family Residential

Two categories of multiple-family residential are provided for in the land use plan: (1) high density, and (2) low density. In no event shall any minimum lot size - except as may be authorized through planned unit developments such as condominiums - be less than 1/2 acre. Further, multi-family developments shall not be permitted except where public sewer service is provided. In addition to apartments, townhouses and patio houses, this land use category also provides for mobile home developments including mobile home subdivisions or mobile home parks. Multi-family areas are allowed only within the Urban Service Line and zoning standards shall provide for amenities such as adequate parking, set backs, landscaping, on-site recreation, storage, and screening from abutting lower density single-family areas. Density standards shall provide for a range of density single-family areas. Density standards shall provide for a range of densities based on the number of bedrooms proposed in a project. Densities shall be reduced as the slope of sites increase.



(1) High Density

The maximum allowable density for high density multi-family areas shall be 16 one-bedroom units per net acre. A density bonus may be added pursuant to the provisions of the City's Housing Element. High density multi-family areas are provided where such development was historically allowed to occur and includes land ringing the downtown, the central commercial corridor and the Atascadero State Hospital.

(2) Low Density

Low density multi-family areas shall not exceed a density of 10 one-bedroom units per net acre. As with high density areas, a density bonus may be allowed pursuant to the City's Housing Element. Low density multi-family areas are appropriate as transitional areas between higher density non-residential and high density multi-family areas and abutting single-family areas. There are also identified locations that had once been zoned for higher multi-family standards applied to existing single-family neighborhoods. The low density multi-family designation has been applied to older single-family areas which had been inappropriately zoned for higher density multi-family use. The lower density designation is intended to encourage new development at a density more compatible with that of the existing single-family mix.

The following table summarizes the residential density standards of the General Plan:

TABLE II-2

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY STANDARDS		
LAND USE CATEGORY	MINIMUM LOT SIZE	
	WITH SEWER	WITHOUT SEWER
<u>Single-Family Residential</u>		
High Density	1ac. (Gross)	1-1/2ac. (Gross)
Moderate Density	1-1/2-2-1/2ac. (Gross)	2-1/2ac. (Gross)
Low Density	*	2-1/2-10ac. (Gross)
Suburban		
<u>Multiple-Family Residential</u>		
High Density	16 1-bdr/ac. (Net)	2-1/2ac./unit (Gross)
Low Density	10 1-bdr/ac. (Net)	2-1/2ac./unit (Gross)

Note: Refer to text for detailed criteria.

- \* Suburban residential areas are outside of the Urban Service Line; however, sewer service may be provided to "cease and desist areas" with the residential density standards to remain unaffected.



### 3. COMMERCIAL

The most challenging goal of the General Plan is to reverse the strip commercial image of the City by implementing a land use strategy which encourages and establishes the creation of strong specialized nodes along El Camino Real to meet the wide variety of commercial, retail and service needs of the City and its trade area. In addition to land use policies which provide for concentrations of compatible uses, the strengthening of the corridor will require private and publicly-funded improvements to enhance the City's image. These include development of a landscaped median along El Camino Real beginning with the downtown area but ultimately extending from Santa Barbara Road to the edge of the retail commercial area northwest of San Anselmo. In addition, the City will continue implementing its appearance review and landscaping standards and seek implementation of the freeway landscape plan prepared by the City for properties lying between El Camino Real and Highway 101. Attractive and effective signage standards shall be enforced for all the non-residential districts.

As a post-Proposition 13 city containing over 24 square miles of land, 23 square miles of which is residential in nature, it is imperative that a sound economic base be assured. Toward this end, it is the City's policy to: (1) develop a strong and attractive downtown, (2) provide for conveniently located neighborhood shopping areas, (3) provide areas for service commercial uses in concentrations which allow for a recognized identity, (4) provide for tourist commercial nodes to serve the traveling public off of freeway interchanges, (5) consider a specific plan for a traveller destination/recreation center adjacent to Highway 101 that is compatible with the City's desired image, (6) consider establishing a craftsman park over-lay zone either in a service commercial or industrial area consistent with Atascadero's rural character to provide employment opportunities for the numerous craftsmen living here, (7) consider allowing rural resort developments in appropriate locations and, (8) identify distinctive locations for planned office development.

Toward this end there are seven commercial land use designations provided for in the General Plan:

#### (a) Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood commercial areas are intended to meet the day-to-day shopping and service needs of immediately surrounding neighborhoods. The traditional principal tenant of a neighborhood center is a market together with compatible convenience outlets such as drug stores, barber and beauty shops, laundromats, and dry cleaning pick-up outlets.



Neighborhood convenience centers should not exceed six acres in size and should be concentrated at the intersections of collector or arterial streets. Atascadero's historic pattern of development has witnessed incorporation of neighborhood centers into what might be characterized as small retail commercial community centers such as Von's/William's Brothers, Food-4-Less/Long's, and Lucky's Town Center. The primary locations proposed for neighborhood commercial nodes are at the intersection of El Camino Real and Del Rio, San Anselmo, El Bordo, Viejo Camino and Santa Barbara roads.

(b) Retail Commercial

Retail commercial areas are intended to meet both the comparison and convenience shopping needs of the City and its surrounding trade area. Principal tenants of retail commercial areas are department stores and hard and soft goods outlets that meet the comparison shopping needs of the community together with supermarkets. Retail nodes are optimally located at intersections of arterial streets (including state highways) or arterials and major collectors. Primary locations designated in the General Plan for retail commercial nodes east of Highway 101 include: San Anselmo and El Camino Real, San Jacinto and El Camino Real, Highway 41 and El Camino Real, Curbaril and El Camino Real, Solano and El Camino Real and Santa Rosa and El Camino Real. Retail commercial nodes west of Highway 101 include: West Frontage Road and Santa Rosa, and three smaller clusters on Morro Road.

(c) Downtown (Refer to Downtown Master Plan)

(d) Service Commercial

Service commercial uses are typically found in the "strip" commercial areas of contemporary cities. They are characterized by uses that are semi-industrial in some respects such as lumber yards, building material supply, wholesaling, storage, auto sales, auto and equipment repair, and printing establishments. These areas are appropriate for uses that would be detrimental to or not benefit from a pedestrian-oriented downtown location and which frequently have outdoor storage needs involving trucking activity and movement of larger products; i.e., large appliances, lumber, plumbing supplies, etc. The plan intends to provide appropriate areas for the vital products and services described in locations which are not detrimental to abutting uses.

Appropriate locations for such uses include districts fronting freeway frontage roads or with direct access onto arterial streets to preclude truck traffic using local residential streets.

Primary locations designated for service commercial in the General Plan are along El Camino Real between Highway 101 and El Camino Real and separating retail and office nodes on El Camino Real.

(e) Tourist Commercial

The tourist commercial land use category provides for uses that serve the travelling public such as motels, restaurants, and automotive services and compatible uses that primarily serve tourist needs. Tourist commercial nodes are appropriately located at Highway 101 interchanges with the City's surface arterial street system. Locations designated on the General Plan include Highway 101 and Del Rio, Highway 101 and San Anselmo, Highway 101 and Highway 41, and Highway 101 and Santa Rosa.

(f) Offices

Offices encompass a wide range of professional, business, and administrative services uses and should be organized in distinctive areas. Past land use practices in Atascadero invited the widespread proliferation of offices throughout a number of different types of land use categories which led to the erosion of the integrity of the underlying non-office zone and a concurrent weakening of designated office areas. Most offices are appropriate in the downtown, especially as second floor uses. Office districts are proposed at San Anselmo and El Camino Real, Pueblo and El Camino Real, Curbaril and El Camino Real, and along Morro Road between San Andres and Portola.

(g) Commercial Park

An area of Commercial Park is designated just south of Del Rio Road and is bounded east and west by Highway 101 and El Camino Real. An additional area of Commercial Park is located on the northeast part of the City at Santa Cruz Road. The intent of this land use designation is to set aside an area for uses included but not limited to:

- (1) Large lot commercial uses, generally on sites of two acres or more, although smaller lot sizes may be allowed for planned unit developments, which



shall include but not be limited to automobile sales agencies, mobile home sales facilities, factory outlet centers, traveler destination/recreation complexes, craftsman parks, and nurseries.

- (2) Light manufacturing and light industrial uses which meet performance criteria established by zoning, research and development companies, labor intensive production and manufacturing companies which are considered "clean" environmentally (such as electronic assembly plants), and which can provide a comprehensive and uniform development plan approach for smaller users.

Generally, development criteria would be similar to that established for industrial parks as described in the Community Appearance and Standards chapter of the Technical Appendix.

#### Policy Proposals

- (1) Infill and restructuring of existing heavy commercial areas shall be encouraged to avoid the indiscriminate proliferation of scattered service commercial uses along El Camino Real.
- (2) Service Commercial Planned Unit Developments shall be encouraged in designated areas.

#### 4. INDUSTRIAL

Both topography and E.G. Lewis' plan for Atascadero played an important role in limiting the potential for industrial uses in the City. Recent analysis of the potential of Atascadero for industrial use by Economic Research Associates has reaffirmed that the potential for industrial development in the community is limited. Nonetheless, industry that has established itself in the City should be encouraged to continue providing important products and services. The preponderance of craft and service workers living in Atascadero suggests that there may be a natural niche for a multi-tenant incubator type industrial space for people attempting to start and maintain small shops and new businesses. Toward this end, the City should consider establishing a distinctive craftsman's park as part of its economic base mix. Similarly, the City should consider establishing a distinctive furniture center and given the proper economic conditions, a planned auto park would be of great advantage to the community. Such districts could be considered in either service commercial or industrial areas.

To provide for the small scale manufacturing and assembling needs of the community, two land industrial land use categories are provided: industrial, and industrial park.

(a) Industrial

The City's historic planned industrial park exists between Traffic Way and Atascadero Creek. This area has the flat land desired by industry, but it adjoins multi-family housing which needs to be buffered from the normal activities of an industrial zone. Existing uses should be encouraged to upgrade to contemporary standards including paved landscaped parking areas, screening of noxious activities from adjoining residences, and enhancement of architectural appearance. Uses devoted to purely outdoor storage should be phased out in favor of activities housed in attractive buildings to optimize the limited amount of industrial space within the City.

(b) Industrial Park

Industrial park areas are intended to be characterized by master planned development comprised of light industrial uses including those of a service commercial nature. They require large lots - generally on sites of two acres or more - unless smaller lots are authorized through the planned unit development process. Typical uses include small scale manufacturing, assembly, research and development, computer-based services, and activities that meet the fabricating needs of the City's trade area. More stringent development standards to assure campus-like development shall be required.

Industrial parks require access to arterial roads in that these uses are freeway dependent. The major area so designated is on North El Camino Real south of the intersection of Del Rio Road and Highway 101. In addition, an area along the Salinas River on Sycamore in proximity to the county storage yard has potential for development as industrial park provided the land is filled properly.

5. PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC

One of the most important components of a community is the public and quasi-public uses which serve the community. Public facilities require large amounts of land and many have specialized site location requirements and involve large capital investments. Thoughtful planning is needed to assure the efficient and effective provision of public services and provision for quasi-public facilities.



The extension of public facilities and services should be closely coordinated with the land use element of the General Plan to assure and implement orderly growth patterns. The City should continue to implement capital improvement projects through a five-year planning process. Development impact mitigation fees shall be utilized to provide for the planned growth of the community. Agencies administering schools and parks should formulate a program for joint use of facilities to attain a system of school-park complexes. Public agencies developing land in the City should conform to site improvement standards required of private developers.

The land use plan map identifies only the major existing and proposed public and quasi-public land uses. Additional uses may be established subject to either amendment to the general plan and/or through compliance with zoning ordinance requirements.

(a) Water Supply

The development of an adequate water supply system is basic to a community. Water is supplied by the Atascadero Mutual Water Company. With one exception, lot owners within the Colony own shares of company stock and are entitled to its services. The exception is that portion of the Eagle Ranch lying within the Colony but west of the Peabody Line.

Atascadero Mutual Water Company draws approximately 2,530 acre feet per year from the 26 million acre foot aquifer known as the Paso Robles Basin, by means of six deep wells in the flood plain of the Salinas River. Five more shallow wells draw from the Salinas River gravel deposits from which 3,610 acre feet of water was drawn in 1988, for a total of 6,140 acre feet of water. In 1976, the State Water Resources Board estimated the total safe yield of the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin at 47,000 acre feet per year. Actual withdrawals, including those by the Atascadero Mutual Water Company, total about 45,000 acre feet.

Projected water district planned build-out water use will approximate 8,200 acre feet per year. This will increase the demand on the Paso Robles Basin by about 1,500 acre feet per year. If this amount and demands by other users were doubled, withdrawals would approximate 90,000 acre feet, an annual overdraft of 43,000 acre feet per year. At this rate, the storage capacity would be reduced by about .0017% yearly, resulting in an 8-1/2% reduction in reserves in 50 years. In short, despite rapid growth, reserves are adequate to permit orderly planning for supplemental sources.

In 1989, the system consisted of six recent 300- to 600-foot wells and five wells of 100-foot depth. The water table at the shallow wells is sensitive to seasonal rainfall, and the hardness, primarily due to the calcium and magnesium content, also varies. The hardness runs from 300 ppm in winter to 500 ppm in summer. To date, there has been little seasonal fluctuation in water level or water quality in the deeper wells; the hardness remains constant at about 244 ppm.

Peak demand during summer months has topped 10 million gallons daily. Current storage capacity of 13 million gallons was met by construction in 1980 of three new reservoirs, totaling 7 million gallons, in outlying areas of the City. An additional 4.78 million gallon tank is planned near San Carlos Road to meet future needs.

Additional resource development by Atascadero Mutual Water Company may include the following projects:

1. Develop deep well No. 11.
2. Develop Jack Creek Dam.
3. Develop Santa Rita Dam.
4. Participation in additional storage at Santa Margarita Lake by raising the height of the Salinas Dam.
5. Participation in the impoundment of the Salinas River behind a second dam downstream from the Santa Margarita Lake Dam, on a site owned by Atascadero Mutual Water Company.
6. Participation in Nacimiento Water Project.
7. Participation in State Water Project.

The Water Company should expand and refine ongoing water conservation programs to encourage prudent use of this valuable resource.

(b) Sewage Disposal

The Urban Services Line encompasses 3,620 acres or about 5.7 square miles of the City. Within this area, there are several improvement districts totaling about 2,100 acres which are served by sanitary sewers. In 1989, the City provided sewer service to 3,264 dwelling units out of a City total of 8,031 dwelling units, or 41% of the population.



The average daily dry weather flow was 1,110,000 gallons per day, with a peak dry weather flow of 1,745,000 gallons per day. The treatment plant was designed to process 1.4 million gallons per day (mgd) and can be expanded to 1.8 mgd with relatively minor improvements. A sewer system master plan is being completed for the purpose of providing for the City's planned sewage (and septage) disposal needs.

The Atascadero County Sanitation District (ACSD) was formed in 1956 and dissolved in 1988 with its duties assumed by the City. The original sewage treatment plant is located at Traffic Way north of the Highway 41 bridge across Atascadero Creek. This plant is now the site of the raw sewage pump station and is at the base of the City's gravity sewer collection system. The site also serves as the City's corporation yard.

In 1978, voters approved a \$1.3 million revenue bond as security for the local share of a new treatment plant on an 80-acre site adjoining the Salinas River south of Curbaril and northeast of the railroad tracks. This plant was completed in November, 1983 with treated effluent being pumped to either the Chalk Mountain Golf Course for irrigation or to infiltration basins.

The City shall continue to require adequate fees to provide for the orderly expansion of the treatment plant and collection system. The Urban Services Line (USL) defines the maximum area that may be served by the sewerage system and any revision to the USL would require approval of a General Plan Amendment. Where major expansions are proposed, an Environmental Impact Report shall be required.

Priority for provision of sewer service shall be as follows:

- \* Areas Not Requiring Amendment of the General Plan:
  1. Cease and desist areas, and other septic problem areas within the Urban Services Line
  2. Other areas within the Urban Services Line.
  3. Cease and desist areas beyond the Urban Services Line.
- \* Areas Requiring General Plan Amendment:

4. Other areas beyond the Urban Service Line requiring a more intensive General Plan Map land use designation provided that the following findings are made:

- a. Extension of sewer service to the area will not overburden the City's sewer plant or collection system.
- b. Extension of sewer service to the area will not affect service to priority areas 1 through 3.

A majority of the City's developed area will continue to be served by private sewage disposal. The Soil Conservation Service ranks much of the suburban residential and agricultural designated lands in the City of Atascadero as severe for septic systems, and most systems require engineered plans. Percolation tests shall be performed for each such lot prior to issuance of building permits. Percolation tests shall be required prior to the processing of applications for parcel or tract maps where private sewage disposal systems are proposed.

(c) Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste collection and disposal is carried on by a City-granted franchise. Participation in garbage collection has historically been voluntary, and there are cases of garbage and trash dumping along roadsides. Mandatory garbage collection shall be instituted for lands within the Urban Reserve Line. Pursuant to state law, a program to achieve maximum recycling of waste products generated by the community shall be instituted to prolong the useful life of the Chicago Grade Landfill. The City shall continue to support effective regional planning for solid and hazardous waste disposal.

(d) Police Protection

Prior to incorporation, the City's police services were provided by a sheriff's substation facility located in the Masonic Temple building in the civic center area. Upon incorporation, police services were located in the City Administration Building. The configuration of the building does not lend itself to an appropriate police facility. A site on the edge of the downtown at El Camino Real and Rosario has been selected to serve the City's needs to full build-out.



Optimum location for a police facility is not as conditioned on distribution of population as is the case for fire stations. Police services are mobile and, therefore, the location is more flexible. The new police facility is centrally located on a high profile site with ready access to the arterial road system.

(e) Fire Protection

Fire protection within the City limits is provided by the Atascadero City Fire Department, which has mutual aid agreements with the San Luis Obispo County Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry. The Atascadero City Fire Department operates out of two fire stations, providing structure and wildland fire protection as well as emergency medical and fire prevention services to the public.

The central station is located at Traffic Way and Lewis Avenue. A second satellite station exists on West Frontage Road between Santa Rosa and San Gabriel. Careful location for such facilities is called for by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), who analyze the City's fire protection capabilities and issue ratings for insurance that affect all residents and enterprises within the community. Factors that are evaluated include station location, water flow capability, water storage capability and hydrant location. In order to achieve adequate fire protection, the following is required:

1. To serve the west side of the City, third and fourth fire stations are needed and should be located in the western portion of the City. Minimum response time standards may be adopted and development proposals evaluated on the basis of ability to serve. Where new lots are proposed beyond an adopted response time from existing stations, specific mitigation measures to address fire safety impacts shall be incorporated into project proposals.
2. Building and fire regulations addressing fire safety will need to be strengthened. Included are ordinances to deal with the need for passive construction methods, fire sprinkler systems in certain buildings and the spacing, accessibility and required gallons per minute flow of fire hydrants.
3. Hydrants must continue to be located on both sides of major arterials in the City to reduce traffic

blockage in the event of a fire in a building fronting on such an arterial.

4. Standardized house and building numbering system to provide ready identification for all buildings from the street must be instituted. Numbers should be located at the edge of the right-of-way adjacent to the vehicular entrance of the building.
5. Provision must be made for expansion of fire suppression services, emergency medical service, and fire prevention functions through manpower and equipment allocations.

(f) Public Utilities

A brief description of the major utility services is as follows:

Natural Gas

Natural Gas service is supplied by the Southern California Gas Company and is generally available throughout the City. Liquified gas is available from private distributors.

Electricity

Electricity is supplied by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and is generally available throughout the City. A fund has been established pursuant to State law to be put towards the undergrounding of utility lines in the business districts. The Downtown was the latest area to have utility lines placed underground.

Telephone

Telephone service is supplied by Pacific Bell and is generally available throughout the City.

Cable Television

Cable television is supplied in the urbanized portion of the City by Falcon Cable Television, a City-granted franchise.

(g) Public Schools

The Atascadero Unified School District has four elementary schools, one junior high school, one comprehensive high school and one continuation high school

within the planning area. In addition, the district has purchased a 35.73-acre site on San Benito and Del Rio Road, which is designated as an elementary/junior high school site, and a 7.13-acre site on South El Camino Real for a K-4 elementary school.

The school district covers 1,213 square miles and extends eastward to the Kern County line. Therefore, local facilities serve more than the existing or anticipated population from the City of Atascadero. The sprawling nature of the residential areas does not lend itself to the concept of "walk-in" or "neighborhood" schools.

The stated capacities of existing schools and their current enrollments, as of May, 1991, are:

	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Lewis Avenue Elementary	489	548
Monterey Road Elementary	589	716
Santa Rosa Elementary	614	680
San Gabriel Elementary	626	729
Atascadero Junior High	759	813
Atascadero Senior High	1,390	1,195
Oak Hills Continuation H.S.	75	75
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,542</b>	<b>4,756</b>

The maximum residential build-out for Atascadero is projected at 31,150 people, based on the number of units allowed per zoning category and household size.

Based on this information, the maximum school population within the City of Atascadero would be as follows:

	<u>District</u>
Elementary	4,710
Junior High	1,400
Senior High	<hr/> 2,435
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,545</b>

It should be recognized that the junior high and high schools also serve the outlying communities of Santa Margarita, Creston, and Carrisa Plains.

This clearly indicates an increasing need for school facilities. The Atascadero Unified School District must make long-term population projections and long-term plans



for classroom space. Actions to be considered shall include:

1. Acquisition of additional school sites.
2. Development of additional school sites.
3. Explore methods of financing school construction.
  - a. State School Building Program
  - b. Developer Fees
  - c. Parcel Tax Election

Within ten years, at present growth rates, it is anticipated that there will be a need for four additional elementary schools, one additional junior high school, and the identification of an additional senior high school site.

In order to construct school facilities as economically as possible, site selection should be restricted to relatively flat sites which are out of the flood plain in order to minimize grading costs.

Recommended acreage and capacity standards for schools are as follows:

	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Elementary Schools	12 to 14	650
Junior High Schools	20 to 25	750
Senior High Schools	50 to 60	1,650

Priority for the development of additional school sites shall be based on the population densities of the respective quadrants.

Additional sites could include an elementary school site and, possible, a junior high and/or senior high school site.

Proposed school sites as shown on the Atascadero General Plan are general in nature and do not necessarily apply to a specific property.

(h) Library

The County Library originally operated out of the Administration Building. The new County Branch Library is



located at the northwest corner of Highway 41 and Atascadero Avenue. The site should be expanded to provide for library expansion and off-street parking.

(i) Civic Center

With the Administration Building as a focal point, Atascadero has a well defined nucleus for a civic center. The formal Italian Renaissance Revival features of the building and grounds provide a sharp contrast to the informal nature of the community. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation between adjoining retail districts should be facilitated by a network of streets and pedestrian walkways through the public complex and across Atascadero Creek. Architectural treatment, signing, parking and circulation should be carefully planned for structures and uses in the vicinity of the Administration Building to assure compatibility. Future facilities for federal, state, county, and other local governmental agencies should be concentrated within - or convenient to - the civic center. This may include cultural facilities such as museum exhibition galleries and civic auditorium. Restoration of the nearby Pine Mountain Amphitheater (Stadium Park) to recapture an attractive feature of the early Colony days should be undertaken.

(j) Institutional Uses

Atascadero State Hospital is the major employer in the planning area. Former surplus lands from the site were used to develop the Chalk Mountain Regional County Park and, under terms of a lease, the City's new Paloma Creek Park. Ownership of Paloma Creek Park should be vested within the City and the site should also be annexed. Coordination between the City and State on any future development should be maintained, and the State should fund street improvements along El Camino Real to bring the frontage up to City standards.

Religious and social establishments, including senior citizens facilities, are important in the community. Their proper placement is subject to zoning standards and findings of compatibility with adjoining uses.

Convenient health care services are also basic to a community. Owing to the constraints of federal programs to assist in hospital construction, the North County was limited to one new facility. Twin Cities Community Hospital, located in Templeton. The former Atascadero General Hospital was occupied by the County Health Department. Ambulance service is available in the Colony, and the Fire Department is rated for EMT-II service.

Proper placement and availability of nursing homes is important. Siting of intensive care agencies, sanitariums, and nursing homes must consider the character of the area in which they are proposed. The density proposed should be compatible with the abutting neighborhood. High density projects would be most appropriate in multi-family or professional office settings, while projects with a low persons-per-acre ratio would be appropriate for these uses where the persons-per-acre ratio proposed is compatible with that of the surrounding area.

## 6. AGRICULTURAL

Atascadero Colony includes some 4,269 acres of agricultural preserves, two of which are the Frank Preserve at 62 acres and the Larson Preserve at 300 acres within the City of Atascadero. The Larson Preserve lies astride San Gabriel Road and is in the process of withdrawing its obligation for agricultural use. The Vierra, Chavez and Eagle Ranch Preserves define much of the City limits to the south and west and are cattle ranches.

Consistent with the county's Land Use Element and Land Use Ordinance, the City supports the twenty - to three hundred twenty - (20-320) acre minimum lot size standard and the State of California's Williamson Act for preservation of agriculture. Actual minimum lot sizes are determined on the basis of type of agriculture that would be viable at those sizes; i.e., intensive truck farming can be accommodated on smaller acreage parcels whereas grazing and dry farm and grain require larger acreages.

Major agricultural areas are designated on the plan to reflect the existing agricultural preserves and are encouraged as a land banking technique within the city limits provided that no new uses be allowed which would conflict with the evolving suburban residential character of the area; e.g., feed lots.

Agricultural use is also recommended as the optimum use in that part of the planning area lying east of the Salinas River below the Eureka Grade.

## 7. RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Rural residential lands are intended for fractured agricultural land areas with a density of from five - to twenty (5-20) acre minimum lot size. Typical land uses include hobby farms for a lifestyle not requiring urban services. This density is also appropriate for steep lands outside of BLM or National Forest jurisdiction which are not appropriate for



suburban density development but have no prospects under government open space use programs.

Areas designated for rural residential include Colony areas beyond the city limits which are not in agricultural preserves and that area lying between the Salinas River and Stadium Park not being considered for public recreational use. Except for the Suburban Residential South Atascadero area, the highest density land use category proposed within the planning area beyond the city limits of Atascadero is rural residential.

#### D. OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION

The state-mandated open space and conservation elements of the General Plan should be closely interrelated. Open space uses are those which are necessary for the preservation of natural resources, for the managed production of a natural resource, for outdoor recreation, and for public health and safety. In its broadest sense, conservation is the protection of a natural resource to prevent exploitation or destruction. Conservation, therefore, includes prudent economic use of a resource as well as complete preservation where warranted. The low density character of E.G. Lewis' plan for Atascadero is in harmony with contemporary mandates of the State of California to preserve open space and conserve natural resources.

##### 1. OPEN SPACE POLICIES

Open space is land where basic natural values have been retained. It can include wilderness areas as well as a small park in the heart of the city. The value of open space then can be viewed according to its function. Open space can have a productive function wherein lands are used for agriculture, forestry or water supply. Open space lands can also have a protective function as in the case of flood plains or limitations on developments in watershed areas. A third function of open space is structural, which has to do with helping shape the form of the community by establishment of urban reserve lines surrounded by green belt uses. Recreation is an additional important function of open space which is particularly addressed in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan. There is also a scenic function of open space recognizing natural, visual relief of mountain hill and forest in contrast to the man-built environment. And clearly there is a psychological function served by the sense of being and wholeness that open space provides.

The varying functions of open space generally do not occur separately. A stream has protective value as a flood channel as well as for wildlife habitat, recreational, and scenic values. This multiple use and value concept of open space



should be stressed and recognized. Any government action to improve one of the functions of open space should be taken with assurance that other values are not damaged or destroyed. Towards this end, the following policies are established to guide community decision-making:

- a. Scenic and sensitive lands including creeks, riparian corridors, wetlands and other areas of significant habitat value shall be protected from destruction, overuse, and misuse by the use of zoning, tax incentives, easements, or fee acquisition.
- b. Public and private development in close proximity to or over such lands shall be carefully evaluated to protect scenic and sensitive lands, including creek reservations, wooded areas, flood plains, prominent view sheds and historic sites.
- c. Scenic and open space easements, parklands and open space dedications shall be obtained through the subdivision and development review process, including but not limited to: floodplains, creek reservations, wooded areas, scenic backdrops, sensitive areas, historic sites and similar suitable areas.
- d. The City shall carefully evaluate both public and private projects to encourage the preservation of trees, watersheds, natural slopes, and other amenities from abuse and destruction.
- e. Lot splits shall be thoroughly evaluated and be in accordance with community plans and principles in order to retain the desired natural character of the community.
- f. Attention shall be paid to the aesthetic result of land division. Building sites shall be encouraged on natural slopes, with minimum disruption of native vegetation and watersheds by thoughtful placement of building site, private sewage disposal fields and access. Building designs inappropriate for hillside locations shall not be approved.
- g. Tree-covered hills shall be preserved to retain the distinctive scenic quality of the community.
- h. Watershed areas of Atascadero shall be protected.
- i. Public-owned creek reserves shall be preserved for park and recreational use, with appropriate areas left in their natural state for public enjoyment and habitat purposes. Any recreational use of the creeks shall minimize its impact on the habitat value and open space qualities of the creeks.

- j. Land use regulations shall provide for open space uses for hazard lands including those areas subject to inundation, high wildland fire risk, or high levels of seismic or other geological hazard.
- k. The waterways in the City shall be maintained in a natural state and concrete channelization of creeks shall be prohibited. Any alterations required for public safety will be guided by this policy.
- l. Building setbacks shall be established by implementing zoning along the banks of Atascadero Creek, Graves Creek, and the Salinas River to insure the uninterrupted natural flow of the streams and protection of the riparian ecosystem.
- m. Land disturbance shall be minimized in proximity to water courses including necessary flood protection measures, such as selective brush cleaning and low-impact trail development.
- n. Areas subject to flooding, as identified through flood hazard overlay zoning and flood maps, shall be protected from unsound development through regulatory ordinances. Some of the flood hazard areas associated with the Salinas River are known to contain significant sand and gravel resources, and active surface mining operations exist in this region. Therefore, new or expanded land uses in the vicinity of these identified mineral resources and/or existing mining operations should be carefully reviewed for their compatibility with surface mining (refer to Technical Appendix - Mineral Resources Management).

## 2. CONSERVATION POLICIES

Conservation in the context of the General Plan is concerned with preservation and protection of natural resources; hence, where the land use plan map may designate large areas for single-family residential use, for example, policies within the general plan and within the open space and conservation section provide direction for environmentally sensitive development of single-family homes. Responsible stewardship to conserve our land, air and water quality is at the heart of the following conservation policies:

- a. Plan and manage to prevent or correct degradation of the environment.
- b. Require soil and erosion control plans where appropriate prior to approving either public or private development projects.



- c. Adopt appearance review guidelines to encourage attractive development. The architectural style of multi-family residential and non-residential buildings shall harmonize with the environment. If fencing is used, it shall be consistent in style with the building.
- d. Beautify the City's entryways. The freeway and other vehicular approaches to Atascadero shall be made more attractive through judicious application of the elements of landscaping and site development (i.e., setbacks, building location, signs and vacant space).
- e. An ongoing abatement program to remove unsafe buildings, require cleanup of premises and vacant lots and eliminate zoning violations shall be maintained. Clean-up campaigns and beautification of existing facilities shall be encouraged.
- f. Support actions which conserve energy and encourage energy conservation. Consumption of non-renewable resources should be minimized. Renewable resources should be re-cycled or replenished.
- g. Support regional programs to encourage recycling of renewable resources.
- h. Adopt a comprehensive Tree Ordinance to protect and replenish native tree species within the City. Permits for both residential and non-residential development shall take into consideration the trees existing on the property. Buildings shall be designed to utilize existing trees in the landscaping pattern. Any trees removed shall either be replaced or in-lieu contributions made to the City's tree replacement fund, depending on the characteristics of the affected site.
- i. Plant street trees. A program of tree planting to enhance the beauty of the Central Business District and all major routes and approaches to the community shall be under-taken.
- j. Support regional programs to maintain clean air. Toward this end, adopt transportation and land use policies which encourage vehicular trip reductions.
- k. Underground utilities. All overhead utility wires should be replaced with underground service.
- l. Protect historic buildings and sites. Atascadero's historic buildings and features shall be preserved and protected in recognition of the role the community's



past plays in its present and future. Consideration should be given to historic overlay zoning to protect appropriate historic districts.

- m. Salinas River Mining. Proposals to extract mineral resources from the Salinas River channel shall be carefully evaluated to ensure conformity with the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act, surface mining criteria contained within the Zoning Ordinance, and flood hazard zoning standards (refer to Technical Appendix - Mineral Resources Management).

## E. IMPLEMENTATION

Once adopted, local units of government are mandated to implement general plans (Government Code Section 65103(c)). State law also requires local units of government to have sub-division and building regulations and open space zoning, all of which are tools for plan implementation. Other plan implementation measures are derived from state laws requiring consistency of local actions with the adopted general plan.

### 1. GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Growth management consists of the systematic use of a combination of techniques to shape community development. The land use plan map is a "horizon" year plan portraying the desired ideal build-out of the City of Atascadero. It is the objective of the City to reach that full build-out at a rate of growth which allows concurrent provision of adequate services necessary to meet the needs of additional growth, including water, sewage disposal, roads and reasonable emergency response time to residences. Further, the plan's intent is to protect both the environmental and aesthetic quality of the community by subjecting development proposals to high standards. Development of a sound economic base will be critical to maintaining and enhancing the community's identity as a distinctive freestanding city.

Urban reserve and urban service line features of the plan are intended to work in concert with strong open space policies of the county. Urban uses should be developed within the urban service line; suburban uses should be developed between the urban service and the urban reserve lines with open space uses guaranteed by county policies beyond the urban reserve line. The plan's policy of limiting urban reserve line expansion to that area between the Salinas River and El Camino Real comprised of state and county-owned lands shall be coordinated with the Local Agency Formation Commissions' sphere of influence policies which should coincide with that of the City. General Plan revisions, subdivision and major development

applications for the unincorporated land within the City's planning area and planning referral area should be referred to the City for review and comment. The county should not allow urban development or permit further fracturing of rural areas beyond the City's urban reserve line. As part of its land use ethic, the City recognizes that the right to the economic use of land is a privilege involving the responsibility for thoughtful stewardship.

A summary of the growth management techniques incorporated in the Atascadero General Plan includes:

- \* Acceptable annual population maximum growth rate goal of 2.5%.
- \* Directing urban uses to locate within the urban services line.
- \* Directing suburban uses to locate between the urban service line and the urban reserve line.
- \* Encouraging open space land uses and programs beyond the urban reserve line.
- \* Environmental protection through conformity with California Environmental Quality Act guidelines and open space and conservation policies of the General Plan.
- \* Utilization of large lot zoning for hazard and sensitive lands and acquisition by fee or easement of selected open space lands.
- \* Capital project planning to assure adequate public services and levying of development impact fees to mitigate the cost of new development to the community.
- \* Coordination with county planning, Atascadero Unified School District, Local Agency Formation Commission and Atascadero Mutual Water Company, and related mutual agencies such as California Division of Forestry in planning for the needs of the City of Atascadero.

## 2. ZONING CONSISTENCY

Following adoption of the updated land use element, highest priority shall be given to initiating comprehensive amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to achieve consistency between zoning and the new General Plan. These amendments would include:

- \* Amend the text and map to mirror the Land Use Element.



- \* Elimination of the special recreation district.
- \* Creation of the rural residential open space district.

In addition, specific minimum lot sizes should be established for suburban residential and low-density single-family residential properties reflecting evaluations of the lot size factors criteria contained in the 1983 Zoning Ordinance provided that creation of new lots would be further subject to meeting all the criteria of the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and subdivision regulations. This would have the effect of eliminating the complex formula contained in present zoning while retaining the objective of careful scrutiny of lot splits to insure conformity with the objectives of the General Plan.

Assurance of the quality and character of the community envisioned in the General Plan will require continued funding for ongoing land use ordinance enforcement programs.

### 3. SUBDIVISION CONSISTENCY

The State Subdivision Map establishes uniform procedures statewide for creating new lots but leaves the standards of approval for new lots to local communities. The City subdivision regulations should be updated to be current with state requirements and consistent with the City's General Plan as required by state law. New lots shall not be permitted where any of the following conditions exist:

- \* Where average slope is over 30%. (Exceptions may be allowed where (1) there is a "building envelope" with an average slope of less than 20%, or (2) the creation of such a lot offers public dedications or easements beneficial to the community.
- \* Where private sewage disposal systems would be required on slopes of more than 30%.

### 4. APPEARANCE REVIEW

The City Council adopted Appearance Review Guidelines as may be amended from time to time is hereby adopted by reference. The General Plan has further recognized the eyesores within the view sheds of Highway 101 freeway and the technical appendix of the General Plan includes the proposed landscaping plan for Highway 101 which is also adopted by reference for implementation. Provisions of both of these documents may be amended from time to time, as may sections of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to sign regulations.



5. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The long-term protection of the environment has been incorporated as a central goal in the Atascadero General Plan and is not thought to be in conflict with the objective of allowing reasonable use of land. Towards this end, major projects or general plan amendment proposals which are identified as having the potential for significant adverse effects on the environment shall be required to have Environmental Impact Reports prepared prior to their consideration. Further, the policies of the Conservation and Open Space Elements in particular shall be adhered to in reviewing both public and private development proposals.

6. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING

No city capital project shall be implemented without first having been reviewed for consistency with the General Plan and environmental evaluations under the California Environmental Quality Act. Toward this end, the Planning Commission shall annually review the proposed Capital Improvement Program of the City and proposed public works projects for consistency with the General Plan. Where major public land acquisition or disposition is proposed, the Planning Commission shall report to the City Council as to conformity of said action with the General Plan.

7. SPECIFIC PLAN

A "specific plan" is a tool enabled by state law for the systematic implementation of all or a portion of the area covered by a general plan. A candidate area for potential alternative development is identified in the General Plan as the south Atascadero area. Consideration of alternative land use categories for all or a portion of that area shall require an application for a General Plan Amendment or may be implemented by a specific plan. Should said plan be adopted by the City in furtherance of the community's planning objectives, the costs sustained by the applicant may be recovered in the future as a surcharge to development applications proceeding under the change in land use designation.

8. REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment combines both police and corporate powers and can be one of the most powerful tools for implementing general plans. Implementation of any adopted redevelopment plan - which must be consistent with the City's General Plan - may be accomplished to revitalize blighted areas. Depending on the adopted plan, the redevelopment agency, which may be the City Council, may acquire land, manage property, relocate tenants,

clear land, prepare sites, build facilities, sell land, and rehabilitate buildings or structures. Generally, redevelopment agencies rely on tax increment financing as the primary source of income. This increment is the growth in the property tax revenue within a defined redevelopment project area which occurs during the redevelopment period. It allows retaining taxes that normally would have gone to the City, County or special districts for purposes identified in the redevelopment plan. The potential for redevelopment as a tool in implementing the Atascadero General Plan should be carefully evaluated. Candidate areas would be portions of the central business district and portions of the historic Traffic Way industrial area.

#### 9. MITIGATION MONITORING

State law requires that mitigation measures be monitored (1) to ensure that required mitigation measures are implemented; (2) to allow the City and interested citizens to verify compliance before, during and after project construction; (3) to generate information on the effectiveness of mitigation measures to improve their effectiveness in future applications, and (4) to guide future decision-making.

The following mitigation measures should be pursued to mitigate the potential impacts identified in the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Land Use, Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan in 1991:

- a. The City should establish truck routes that direct truck traffic away from residential neighborhoods.
- b. Expansion of the capacity of the sewage treatment plant and distribution system should be planned to precede or coincide with the increase in the demand beyond current capacities resulting from development under the Land Use Element (LUE). New development within the Urban Services Line should not be permitted unless adequate capacity to serve such development is available.
- c. The addition of police officers and support staff should precede or coincide with the increase in population.
- d. The addition of fire stations and personnel should precede or coincide with the increase in population in accordance with the LUE.
- e. The expansion of the landfill should precede or coincide with the increase in population in accordance with the LUE so that capacity is not significantly exceeded.



- f. The expansion of school facilities should precede or coincide with the increase in population in accordance with the LUE so that capacity is not significantly exceeded.
- g. The expansion of parks and recreation facilities should precede or coincide with the increase in population in accordance with the LUE so that the preferred levels of service are maintained.
- h. The City should develop and adopt an implementation program, based on the Long Range Fiscal Plan, for increasing revenues over the next several years. This plan may be included as an element of the General Plan, or may be adopted separately as a strategic plan.
- i. Circulation improvements should be installed in accordance with long range improvement planning implemented by Five Year Capital Improvements Programs.
- j. The City should promote the attainment and maintenance of state and federal air quality standards through the adoption and implementation of one or more of the following programs:
  - \* Trip Reduction Ordinance
  - \* Public Transit Improvements
  - \* Bicycling and Bikeway Improvements
  - \* Park and Ride Lots
  - \* Circulation System Planning
  - \* Local Agency Cooperation and Coordination
- k. The mixing of commercial and residential land uses should be encouraged when it will reduce independence on the automobile, improve the balance between jobs and housing, and will not create incompatible land use relationships.
- l. Additional development will be conditioned upon the availability of water.
- m. If the development of a site uncovers cultural resources, the recommendations of Appendix K, California Environmental Quality Act (Section 15 - et seq of the Government Code) shall be followed for identification, documentation and preservation of the resource.
- n. The City should document and record data or information relevant to prehistoric and historic cultural resources which may be impacted by proposed development. The accumulation of such data shall act as a tool to assist



decision-makers in determinations of the potential development effects to prehistoric and historical resources located within the City.

- o. The Circulation Element should address the need for, and location of, a "route to school" plan to encourage safe alternatives to the automobile as the primary mode for transporting children to and from school.
- p. The City should consider requiring project-specific trip reduction measures to be incorporated into development projects to help reduce vehicle miles travelled and improve air quality. Such measures would include, but not be limited to, reducing the required number of parking spaces, providing transit stops/bus turnouts, providing bike lockers and changing facilities, preferential parking for carpools, and providing on-site child care services.
- q. The development of residences in the industrial area proposed for residential land use northeast of Traffic Way on Ferrocarril shall be prohibited until the concrete batch plant ceases operation or until the potential air quality impacts on surrounding properties can be mitigated to an acceptable level.
- r. Grading shall not occur and buildings or structures requiring permit approval shall not be located within any creekway riparian vegetation boundary unless:
  - (i) A site-specific evaluation pursuant to standards approved by the City determines that a lesser setback will provide adequate habitat protection; or
  - (ii) The City completes a creekway mapping program and adopts other specific setback requirements based upon that mapping program.
- s. The habitat requirements of rare, endangered, or threatened species and Species of Special Concern shall be incorporated into the City of Atascadero environmental review guidelines and made a part of the initial environmental study checklist.
- t. The City shall implement a comprehensive creek protection policy and management plan. Such a plan may include the following elements:
  - \* The identification of areas along creeks to be regulated by the Plan.



- \* Implementation mechanisms, such as minimum setbacks for new development.
- \* The identification of activities that are prohibited in creek areas, which may include grading, tree/vegetation removal, culverting, and other activities that promote erosion, sedimentation and the degradation of water quality.
- \* The identification of specific criteria for:
  - .. optimum stream channel configuration and capacity
  - .. habitat restoration
  - .. access/trail locations

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